



William M and Ann Murdoch Giles

Ann Murdoch was the fourth child of John Murray and Ann Steel Murdoch. She was born September 14, 1854 in Salt Lake City, Utah. She was named Ann after her mother. Ann was born the year the grasshoppers were so destructive to the crops in Salt Lake.

She was born of goodly parents who left their all and joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Scotland, experiencing many tribulations for the gospel's sake, and came to Utah. They arrived in 1852. After eight years of struggle and working in the Church and mingling with the Saints of God, they decided to move.

In 1860, Ann, with her parents and sisters, came to Provo Valley (now Heber City) in company with William Forman and family and others. The first home of the family was a dugout built at the old Heber Fort located in the northwest part of Heber. There was no stove, so meals had to be cooked in an open fireplace. There were bake skillets in which the bread was baked and there were a few pots and pans. Their soap was homemade and also their cloth for making clothes was homespun from wool. The women had to work and were kept as busy as the men. They also made candles for lights out of mutton tallow. There was a good family love in the Murdoch family.

As a child, Ann was very active. The school she attended had only one room with a mud roof and rough homemade benches. She was very energetic and became a very good student. Her education was fair for those times.

She loved music and used her beautiful voice all her life for the benefit of others, in school and social activities. As children at home, the girls enjoyed singing for their father and mother. Many pleasant times were spent during the long winter evenings in family singing.

"I remember Mother playing the comb while we sat on the floor and sang in the evenings. My mother was very talented musically--she could play most any instrument and had a lovely singing voice. In fact, she used to sing in all the funerals in Wasatch county."

Ann was a grand games player with the children and in our youth we spent many happy hours in and among the wild flowers as there were no other flowers grown there. We gathered many wild flowers, and we, as community children, gathered many wild berries for our parents, such as choke cherries and service berries, to dry and use in the home. She, with her older sister, gathered cattails to make beds, as did other pioneer children. She was the daughter of pioneers and she

was a true pioneer herself. Her parents passed through trials of poverty, mud-roofed houses, and Indian troubles. She was one of the family and never considered these hardships as trials but always lent a helping hand.

As she grew older she, with her sisters (there being no brothers in the family at this time), was taught to drive the team of oxen, to milk the cows, to tend the chickens, and to make butter and cheese. She was a good girl to help our father with our little farm, doing whatever she was asked to do. She had a motto she would repeat to us: "All that you do, do with your might; things done by halves are never done right."

In our childhood days, there came a family from Nottingham, England, in 1862, and settled across the street from our residence. Their names were Thomas and Mariah Kirkham Giles, Elizabeth, George M., and William M. Giles. William became one of our intimate childhood friends. As we grew older, we all were in our social crowd together. We all joined in going to socials, plays, meetings, and dances, and roaming over the green fields. We gathered the wild berries and joined in all the fun of the young folks.

Then as Ann grew older, William selected her as his best girl. Their parents lived just one block apart, so William and Ann became very well acquainted with each other, and, as young people, took a large part in building up this western country.

She was the daughter of a farmer and he was the son of a farmer, so they were very well suited for each other. William was an Indian fighter, and when, as a young man, he was called to go guard against the Indians young Ann would ask Heavenly Father to protect William Giles and to spare his life so he could return to her. This was very much to the amusement of the family.

In the spring of 1866, Robert T. Burton and David J. Ross came to Heber to organize the militia and to get all to enlist if possible. It was known that Blackhawk and his warriors intended to start killing the cattle and making raids on the settlements. Practically all men of proper age enlisted and bought guns and ammunition so they could defend themselves and their property.

The gun that was purchased by William M. Giles at this time was later put in the Fort Duchesne Museum by James A. Giles of Myton, the son of William M. Giles. The gun was purchased in 1865 and the name on it is the Spencer Repeating Rifle Company, Boston, Massachusetts, patented March 6, 1860.

William M. Giles enlisted in the cavalry and took part in a number of expeditions. He, in company with twenty-three others, under Major John Hamilton, went to the Indian reservation with supplies of bacon, flour, rice, sugar, and other supplies, intending to pacify and make friends with the Indians if possible, and stop the war. But they found only a few of the very old Indians and squaws who received the supplies, and the war went on.

Another time, later on, the Indians made one of their several raids on this valley, and William M. Giles was called to follow them and try to get them to give back the horses, but in this he failed. The Indians drove the horses across the Provo River near William Bagley's and over into American Fork Canyon, expecting to get ahead of our men. Our men followed them into the cedars, but finally lost track of them.

Of the seven raids made on this valley, the Indians got away with the stock six times.

Those were stirring times, and men ran many risks of their lives. Seventy white people and many Indians were killed during that war. William M. was one of those who often risked his life trying to protect the lives of others. He was a good provider for his family and did his full share in helping to build up this country, especially Heber City.

On the fifth day of June, 1871, William M. and Ann Murdoch were married in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. Their first home was built down in the field just west of the Heber ball park. Later, they built a nice two-story brick house at 191 West 100 South in Heber. The house still stands and is owned by William Sheets.

To them the following children were born: John Thomas (also known as John T.M.) September 22, 1872; Mariah, May 4, 1874; William, 24 October 1875; Jane Ann, March 13, 1877; George D., January 11, 1879; Sarah Elizabeth, September 30, 1880; Joseph Fielding, January 6, 1882; Orson Edwin, September 25, 1883; James Alvin, April 18, 1885; Henry Alexander, February 15, 1887; and Charles Andrew, March 15, 1888. All of these children were born in Heber City, Utah.

William and Ann were hard working people. William M. homesteaded 160 acres southwest of Heber, down close to the river, known as the Bill M. Homestead. They farmed, milked cows, raised pigs and chickens, and churned butter. When Ann churned the cream it was put in an old wooden churn. There was a dash that had to be worked up and down for several minutes before the butter would come. Then the buttermilk would have to be worked out with a wooden paddle before the butter could be used. Ann would leave large chunks of butter in the buttermilk, then give it to some of her sisters or neighbors so they would also have some butter. She was kind to everyone.

Ann was a good housekeeper, and she loved her children dearly. She was always a wonderful mother, making home a pleasant place for her family and for many, many others who would call. One young man told the writer that the happiest time of his life was when he visited the home of Annie Giles with her family and she would play the comb music and they would all dance. She was a grand Relief Society worker and gave a tender helping hand to the poor and the needy. As Ann was blessed with a comfortable living, never were those in need turned from her door nor neglected by her. Her dear friend, Mary Foreman, composed a poem about her, but this verse is all I can remember:

Annie was a Mormon,  
A friend unto the poor,  
And never did she turn away  
The hungry from her door.

She had to do her washing in a tub, scrub the clothes on a washboard, and wring the water out of them by hand. When she ironed, she used flatirons heated on top of the stove. The floors were just boards and had to be scrubbed with a scrubbing brush. So her household chores were very hard and time consuming.

They were successful in raising their family in spite of the many, many problems they had to solve. Ann was a true daughter, a true sister, a true wife and mother. They were both true pioneers.

Ann's life was short. She contracted pneumonia and was expecting her twelfth child. The pneumonia was too much for her, and she died January 2, 1890, leaving ten living children. One daughter, Mariah, preceded her in death.

A tribute to Ann Giles was written by Verna Giles, her granddaughter, in 1927. She was the daughter of George David and Mary Elizabeth Mair Giles of Heber City, Utah. Verna was looking at her dear Grandmother Ann's picture which was hanging on the wall of her father and mother's home when these wonderful thoughts came to her mind:

Dear Grandmother of Mine

Although your face I've never seen,  
Nor felt your tender caress,  
Your photograph is so serene,  
It seems you're near to bless.

Your eyes so mild, your mouth so kind  
Tell of beauty and love.  
Your patient soul, your gentle mind,  
God gave as gifts from above.

The kindness you rendered to others  
Is written right there on your face,  
It says, "Among wonderful Mothers,  
You hold a most wonderful place."

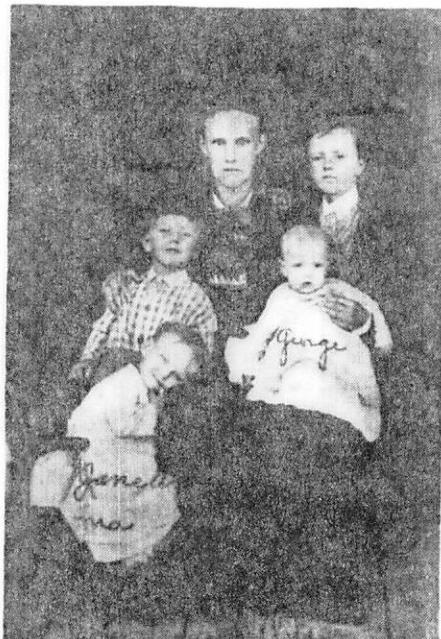
As I study that dear picture of a wonderful you,  
It tells me again and again  
That you were a true friend through and through  
And a beautiful mother to men.

And so, dear grandmother of mine,  
I'm thankful day by day  
That your life shows, lovely, true, and fine,  
In your picture tucked away.

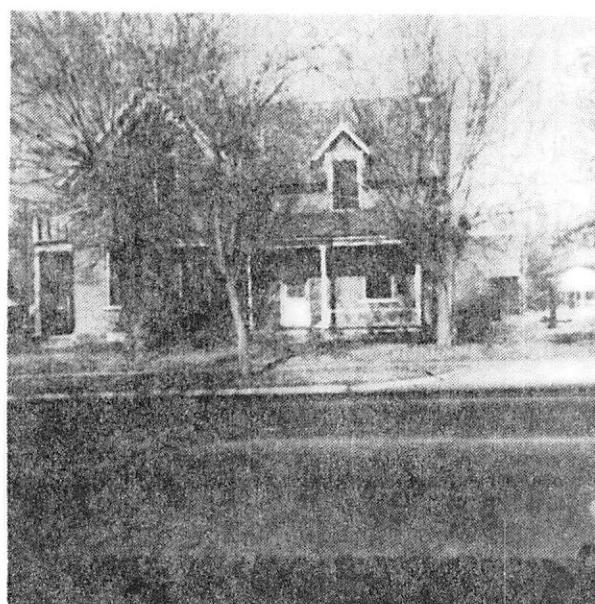
William took care of his little flock, and through the blessings of the Lord and with faithful and diligent labor, managed to raise them all to man and womanhood. Sometime after Ann's death, William married Rachel Howarth Fortie, widow of Alexander Fortie. She was a faithful helpmate to him in helping him raise his family.

History compiled by Melva E. Giles Mitchell from the following sources:

1. William Giles--Ann Murdoch
2. "A Historical Sketch of Ann Murdoch Giles and William M. Giles" by Janett Murdoch McMullin.
3. History of James Alvin Giles as told to Sharon Giles in spring of 1963.
4. William M. Giles History
5. "Memories of Grandmother Ann Murdoch and Grandfather William M Giles" by Gladys Zella Giles Rowley.
6. "A Short History of Ann Murdoch Giles" by Ruth Giles Davis Sweat.



Left to right: Jane Ann Giles, William Giles, Ann Murdoch Giles, John Thomas Giles, and George David Giles (baby on lap).



Home of William M and Ann Murdoch Giles  
Heber City, Wasatch, Utah.